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CLASSIFICATION

COUNTRY Soviet Zone of Germany

REPORT NO.

TOPIC Large Soviet Units Crossing the Elbe River at WITTENBERG

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EVALUATION

SOURCE OBTAINED

DATE OF CONTENT

DATE OBTAINED

DATE PREPARED 6 December 1949

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REFERENCES

PAGES 3 ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)

REMARKS

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SOURCE

The following observations in connection with large-scale Elbe River-crossing exercise were made in the WITTENBERG (N 52/3 37) area:

13 October 1949

1. Fourteen armored reconnaissance cars, 2 light A. guns, ten motor vehicles with [REDACTED]
- 10 to 12 motor vehicles [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] tree trunks and bridge building equipment were entrained in WITTENBERG.

2. 15 October 1949

A train carrying 20 tanks, numerous trucks, several field kitchens and troops passed through WITTENBERG. Railroadmen stated that several trains with tanks had been observed during the preceding days. The tanks allegedly belonged to tank units leaving WITTENBERG.

3. 16 October 1949

A general with a staff of about 15 officers arrived at the Elbe River near MUEHLANGER (southeast suburb of WITTENBERG).

4. 17 October 1949

- a. Twelve trucks carrying pontoons moved through MUEHLANGER.

b. About 25 trucks with [REDACTED] went from the woods near DISTIONSBOEF (N 52/3 47) to WITTENBERG. The trucks were followed by 30 motorcycles and 5 armored reconnaissance cars and, at about 3 p.m. by 9 tanks.

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Document No.

No Change in Class.

☒ Declassified

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Date: 21 May 78

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This document is hereby regraded to CONFIDENTIAL in accordance with the letter of 16 October 1978 from the Director of Central Intelligence to the Archivist of the United States.

Approved For

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18 October 1949

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5. a. About 30 trucks, having [REDACTED] and loaded with pontoons, bridge building equipment and one motor boat, passed through MUEHL-ANGER en route from WITTEMBERG to DISTRICHSDOEF. Local residents reported a tent camp in the woods near DISTRICHSDOEF.

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20 October 1949

6. a. Heavy truck traffic was observed between WITTEMBERG-ZOERNIGALL (N 52/E 47) and ZAHNA (N 52/E 48).

b. A large-scale river-crossing exercise, illuminated by searchlights, was held at the Elbe River near MUEHL-ANGER in the evening and night of the same day. A pontoon bridge was thrown almost parallel to the high tension line crossing the Elbe River near MUEHL-ANGER. Most of the required bridge building material had been shipped to this place by truck during the preceding days. With the bridge completed, an estimated two hundred tanks, five hundred trucks, most being occupied by young troops, two hundred motorcycles and several passenger cars crossed the bridge at rather high speed. Several trucks hauled AT guns. About two thirds of the tanks were of medium size, the rest of large size.

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Twelve tanks protected the bridge on the opposite river bank [REDACTED] ling the bridge [REDACTED]

21 October 1949

Local residents reported that motor boats towed away the pontoon bridge.

21 October 1949

8. Most of the vehicles which crossed the bridge returned across the Elbe River bridge near PRATAU (N 52/E 37) in the afternoon and were entrained in WITTEMBERG. On the same day heavy artillery fire was heard in MUEHL-ANGER.

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22 October 1949

9. About 15 tanks were entrained in WITTENBERG. The

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Field Comment:

a. The report confirms and supplements previous information by another source (F) *. Movements from the JUSTERBOG-TERDER-ARKLINDORF area towards the Elbe River on 6 and 10 October 1949 were interpreted as an assembly of troops who were to participate in the Elbe River-crossing exercise southeast of WITTENBERG on 21 October 1949. **

b. According to available information, the following units participated in the exercise:

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Engineer unit of the Group of Occupation Forces Germany (HQ unit from POTSDAM with motor vehicles of the [REDACTED] component units of the 6th and 7th Gds Tank Divs (Cadre) and HQ units of the Third Gds Meck Army (Cadre).

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c. The information that the troops engaged in the river-crossing exercise were immediately afterwards entrained in WITTENBERG indicates that the troops joined the final maneuvers of the Third Gds Meck Army (Cadre) in the JUSTERBOG-LUCKENWALDE area during the second half of October 1949. The tank units entrained in WITTENBERG on 13 and 15 October 1949 presumably proceeded to the mentioned maneuver area.

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